

****ATTENTION****

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"Figures Lie and Liars Figure,"

the sage says.

But figures are also one of the only ways of measuring results. In the case of wildlife, although incomplete and often inexact, number comparisons are one way of measuring how far we have come. Often they are the only way of putting our gains and losses, victories, defeats and holding actions in perspective.

Washington is the smallest of the ten western states, 20 percent smaller than neighboring Idaho, the next smallest. Over 61 percent of its 66,511 square miles is in private hands, subject to modification or development.

Each year for the last 20 years, Washington has added an average of 65,000 new residents each year. They need more places to live, more shopping centers, gas stations, movie theatres and restaurants.

These needs destroy wildlife habitat at the rate of 30,000 acres annually, an area the size of the City of Spokane.

This loss of habitat is estimated to have cost Washington 1.5 million wild animals since 1975.

A lot of things have changed in Washington since the first Earth Day, twenty years ago. From a wildlife perspective, some of the changes have been positive, others catastrophic. The following list is not a complete roster of those changes and trends, only a sampling, a rough cross-section of how we're doing with our stewardship of Washington's wildlife resources. It is intended to make us think.

Sources: Washington Data Book; OEM; misc. WDW program reports; pers. comm. with WDW program managers.

 Recycled paper
conserves wildlife habitat.

EARTH DAY INDEX

Washington human population	1970: 3,413,200	1989: 4,660,700
Washington human population density	1970: 51/sq.mi.	1989: 70/sq.mi.
Washington human population rate of growth	1970: 0.5%	1989: 2.1%
Number of elk	1970: 51,000	1989: 52,000
Number of blacktail deer	1970: 172,000	1989: 200,000
Number of mule deer	1970: 103,000	1989: 135,000
Number of whitetail deer	1970: 65,000	1989: 67,000
Number of Columbia whitetail deer	1970: 300-400	1989: 750-1,000
Number of moose	1970: 60	1989: 180
Number of pronghorn	1970: 50	1989: 60
Number of black bear	1970: 22,000	1989: 21,000
Number of grizzly bear	1970: 10	1989: 11 radio-tagged in the Selkirk Mountains, one bear confirmed in the North Cascades for the first time in decades.
Number of cougar	1970: 1,500	1989: 1,500
Number of bighorn sheep	1970: 220	1989: 800
Number of mountain goats	1970: 10,000	1989: 7,500
Number of resident wolves	1970: 0	1989: biologists believe there is one resident pack in the North Cascades.
Number of wild turkey	1970: 2,000	1990: 5,000
Number of woodland caribou	1970: 25	1989: 74-80
Number of peregrine falcon nests	1970: 2	1990: 12 nests produced 15 young birds.

EARTH DAY INDEX

Number of nesting pairs of bald eagles along the marine coast in the first inventory	1975: 114	The same survey in 1990 found 300 nesting pairs along the coast, another 66 pairs inland.
The number of wintering bald eagles in Washington	1979: 620	1989: 2,870
Number of sea otters	1970: 43	1989: 212
Number of nesting sandhill crane pairs in Washington	1970: 0	1989: 1
Number of assorted waterfowl	1970: 1,237,163	1989: 1,044,277
Number of Canada geese	1970: 23, 258	1989: 62,066
Number of Aleutian Canada geese	1977: 1,600	1989: 6,000
Number of black brant	1970: 8,078	1989: 13,756
Number of swans	1970: 664	1989: 1,122
Number of mallards	1970: 762,497	1989: 594,709
Number of pintail ducks	1970: 50,375	1989: 74,837
Number of widgeon	1970: 92,751	1989: 116,486
Number of hunting licenses sold	1970: 322,791	1989: 269,667
Number of fishing licences sold	1970: 499,359	1989: 646,659
Number of free licenses issued	1970: 0	1989: 51,710
Acres of public access areas owned by WDW	1970: 3,881	1990: 9,271
Acres of public access areas controlled but not owned by WDW	1970: 15,686	1990: 16,165



Washington Wildlife

EARTH DAY INDEX

20 YEARS LATER

Washington Department of Wildlife



Serving Washington's
wildlife and people
now and in the
future.

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